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SOCIAL ACTION DIGEST

Bishops Ask Moral Revival

UNCHANGING DUTY IN A CHANGING WORLD

The Catholic bishops of the United States called on Americans in their annual statement to be personal witnesses to the existence of moral principles based on religious beliefs in order to reverse what they described as a "unique" decline in the nation's morality.

The bishops also urged a profound renewal of the American people's sense of moral responsibility on the personal, social and international level at "this hour of greatest opportunity."

The following is the full text of the statement issued on November 19 by the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference on behalf of the cardinals, archbishops and bishops of the United States following their annual meeting in Washington, D. C. (Subtitles added.)

Founding Fathers Guided by Moral Principles

Few nations of the world can look back on their historic origins with such justifiable pride as the United States. That pride, in large measure, finds it justification in the high moral principles which guided our Founding Fathers in laying the foundations of our government and in launching this Nation on its history. Our first legal documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with its first ten Amendments, marked us from the beginning as a nation committed to the principles of the moral law.

Those principles and the religious beliefs that underlie them continue to guide our people in their national development. At a time when

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our country was emerging from infancy into vigorous youth, De Tocqueville, in his still widely read "Democracy in America," said: "Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions. I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion — but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. (De Tocqueville: Democracy in America, Vintage Books, Vol. 1, p. 310). Later at the end of the 19th century, when our country was entering upon its maturity, another European observer, James Bryce, still could write: "Religion and conscience have been a constantly active force in the American Commonwealth . . . not indeed strong enough to avert many moral and political evils, yet at the worst times inspiring a minority with a courage and ardor by which moral and political evils have been held at bay and, in the long run, overcome" (James Bryce: The American Commonwealth, Macmillan Co., 3rd ed., Vol. 2, p. 599). In the present century it was not without a sense of moral duty that the United States became an arsenal of defense against totalitarian aggression, a storehouse to feed the hungry and starving world, a Samaritan helping defeated enemy nations to rehabilitate themselves in peace. The history of our country has been generally infused with an ideal based on moral principles.

Evidence of Moral Deterioration

The time has come to confess, however, that our national ideal no longer rests upon a foundation of broad and solid popular morality. Ignorance of moral principles and the rejection of the very notion of morality are on the rise today and threaten to undermine our nation and its most sacred traditions. The evidences of our moral decline are everywhere to be seen: in the alarming increase in crime, particularly among the young; in the sensational treatment of violence and sexuality in literature, on the stage, screen and television; in the disclosures of greed and cynicism in government, labor and business; in the stubborn continuance of race prejudice and injustice; in the multiplication of divorce and in the rapid disintegration of the family; in a harsh and pagan disregard of the sacredness of human life concealed under the mantle of science.

This present moral deterioration cannot be interpreted as a mere temporary relaxation of standards which will be followed by the sort of moral reform past experience would lead us to expect. The conditions we face are unique; for them, the past gives neither precedent nor guide. Many men are questioning and often denying the objective distinction between good and evil and the ability of human reason to know with certainty what is right and wrong. They are cutting themselves off completely from moral traditions. For the first time in history they find themselves without a moral law to break.

Reasons for Moral Revolution

The reasons for this moral revolution can be ascertained at least in part. Just as the high morality of our early history found its strength in religion, so now the rejection of morality finds its most basic cause in the denial of God. Here, too, is something quite new. In the past there have always been men who for various reasons have denied the existence of God. But the present atheism is different. Now not only do many act and live as if there were no God to Whom they are responsible, but a steadily increasing number — some individuals of great influence — proclaim the nonexistence of God to be a scientifically established fact. The consequences of such an attitude are inescapable. If there is no God, then the old morality based on God is not valid. The whole of human life has to be reorganized on a new basis. Many modern men find themselves without God and religion, on a lonely eminence of their own making, left to create their own moral values, forced to determine for themselves what is good and evil, right and wrong.

In their newly proclaimed independence, modern men have tended to place their main reliance on physical science. While the enemies of religion and morality have attempted to make science the principal weapon of their attack, actually science itself has no part in this warfare. "Science," says one of its most eminent scholars, Dr. Vannevar Busch, "does not exclude faith . . . science does not teach a harsh materialism. It does not teach anything beyond its boundaries, and those boundaries have been severely limited by science itself." (Vannevar Busch: Modern Arms and Free Men, p. 78). But many who have taken science as their creed and their cult do not share the humility of the scientist. With invincible self-assurance and with an air of unchallenged authority, they teach a scientism that denies God and makes sport of the moral law. From positions many of them occupy in schools and universities, in literature and journalism, with all the modern media of communication at their command, they succeed in impressing their doctrine on great numbers of misled minds.

Toward the present moral decline, the modern media have done more than supply instruments for the spread of unbelief and moral revolt. Although the communications industry through many sincere and admirable leaders has made valuable contributions to human welfare, yet it has also inflicted on the modern world a pernicious cult of the "image." Submerged beneath waves of publicity from "image-makers" and "hidden persuaders" mod-

ern man tends to become a victim of the image. Whether a thing is true is less important than the impression it creates. Man's moral focus is distorted. For nations as well as individuals the all-important thing is the image that is projected on the minds of others. The rosy deception is rated good if it suceeds — in selling more products, in winning more votes, in convincing more taxpayers.

Popular education also bears a measure of responsibility for the decline and rejection of moral principles. At first, there was no intention of excluding either religion or morality from the common tax-supported school. But the diversity of our religious pattern and the rising pressure of secularism have produced the school without religion, and it was idle to suppose that this school could long inculcate in American youth moral convictions which would be firmly held. The result is that our society is now faced with great numbers of young people almost completely devoid of religious belief and moral guidance — young people who are causing increasing concern at every level of the community and in all parts of our country.

Beneath these present trends and pervading all modern society has been the influence of secularism — the banishment of God from public and private life and the enthronement of human nature in His place. Born in the "Enlightenment" of the 18th century, deriving its great impetus from the French Revolution, adopted and fostered by 19th century Liberalism, it became and still remains the principal characteristic of modern society. Under its influence, men may not perhaps deny God; on formal occasions, they may even mention His name. In practice, however, they simply ignore His existence. They do not openly reject moral principles; they may even pay them lip-service. But they disregard them or reduce them to hazy generalities. In general, the only sanctions they recognize are those supplied by individual taste, public opinion and the power of the state.

Widespread Moral Apathy

The result of these trends has been, even among those who have not rejected moral principles, a widespread moral apathy which touches practically every group: citizens who are not concerned enough to exercise the right to vote; elected officials who are interested only in their "public image," their personal power; union members, labor leaders, and industrialists who place their selfish interests above national security and the common good. Harmful as these weaknesses are, our acknowledgment of them can give no real comfort to our enemies. It is the American tradition to look at ourselves, to examine our conscience, to reappraise our moral position. In a dictatorship this is impossible. In a democracy it is a constant necessity.

Both apathy and amorality certainly run counter to the American tradition. Because we have been a moral people, it has been characteristic of Americans ultimately to be guided by moral considerations and, even in periods of laxity, to respond vigorously to moral appeals. Our best traditions have been based on moral principles and ideals. We must remain true to them. We of the household of the faith have a special obligation to promote them. What, then, are our particular duties in the face of present conditions?

Our Duties

In today's world, our most obvious duty is to speak out, to make open profession of religious beliefs and moral convictions, to reaffirm morality as the foundation of our nation's past greatness and of its future aspirations. We must indeed be prepared to demonstrate the falseness of the claims of scientism, the hollowness and futility of the cult of the image, the corrosive effect of secularism on both the individual and society. Especially we must recognize and affirm the essential place of religion and morality in the formation of the human personality if we are to survive as a moral people. But over and above all this, the temper of the times demands that, by our words and acts, we bear personal witness to the existence of moral principles grounded on religious belief. In a world in which individual obligation is being denied, we must show the reality of personal responsibility — transcendent responsibility to God for all acts and attitudes, personal accountability for self, for family, for community, for nation. In particular, our teaching, our influence, and our conduct must show that the soundness of society depends on the principles of family life: the unity and sanctity of marriage, parental duty and authority, filial reverence and obedience.

As God-fearing people we must not only bear witness to those principles governing personal and family life; we must also give testimony to the reality and importance of those moral principles which govern man's wider social relationships. Pope John has recently reminded all Catholics of this obligation. "The social teaching proclaimed by the Church," he tells us, "cannot be separated from her traditional teaching regarding man's life." The norms of justice contained in the great social encyclicals of the Popes during the past 70 years are vital moral principles, just as are the principles of individual morality. We have the duty to know these principles through study and reading, through reflection and prayer. Nor can these principles be allowed to lie idle. "Social norms of whatever kind," says Our Holy Father, "are not only to be explained but also applied. This is especially true of the Church's teaching on social matters, which has truth as its guide, justice as its end, and love as its driving force" (Encyclical "Mater et Magistra," No. 222 and No. 226. SOCIAL ACTION DIGEST, Sept.

1961, p. 14). The moral influence of these social principles must be made to permeate all of society and its institutions. The laborer must bring them to his union meetings; the industrialist, to the business world; the teacher, to his class; the parent, to his home — each to the sphere of life in which he moves. Only in this way will each religious person become involved with his fellow-citizens in constructing a "public philosophy" based on a frank acceptance of God and the moral law.

In rebuilding a sound religious and moral foundation for America, a special difficulty arises from the varied character of our society. Since we are a people of many religious beliefs, of diverse racial and national origins, there will undoubtedly always be tensions and some misunderstandings. But these differences will not constitute insurmountable barriers to national peace and cooperation if we are faithful to the moral principles which are the foundation of our traditions — particularly if we complement justice with charity. This is true of the racial issue which continues to rise and plague our country; it is true of other issues which divide us.

World-wide Obligations

Our moral responsibility, however, transcends the limited circle of our individual lives and the confining borders of our country. Our interests and our obligations are world-wide — indeed our horizons are no longer confined to this earth; they have been projected into the uncharted seas of space. In its earlier years, our nation — young in its freedom and confident in the nobility of its democratic ideals — stood as an inspiration to all those who suffered in bondage and hoped for freedom. Country after country, encouraged by the success of our endeavors, threw off their shackles and asserted their independence. Millions flocked to our shores as to the haven of freedom and hope. Now, in our more mature years, the newer nations and some of the older impoverished ones have looked to us for material help and for the most part they have received from us a ready response. But they — particularly the emerging people — have needs that go deeper than the requirements for mere material help. They want more positive evidence of our understanding. They seek a recognition of their dignity, both individual and national. They crave the knowledge and technical skill which will enable them to help themselves. They need the vision which comes from faith, and the encouragement that comes from hope. They must have spiritual ideals and spiritual leadership. Our own freedom sprang in large measure from religious and moral sources. We must inspire these nations wherever possible to build on a religious and moral foundation if we are to contribute significantly to the achievement of their national aspirations. Meanwhile, we must be willing to open our hearts and our homes to those who come to our shores; to make room for them in our schools and universities; even to send our own sons to their lands to assist them. All these things we must do, not as mere counter-moves against Communism, but for their essential rightness, as expressions of our highest principles: love of God and love of neighbor.

Because we have so often faltered in our course, and because the Communist nations have profited by our mistakes to inspire false ideals and to awaken glittering but barren hopes, we must not be discouraged, imagining that our hour of opportunity has passed. It has not passed. The hour of greatest opportunity is striking now, as the forces of freedom and of tyranny gird for a decision. America's strength, bestowed by Divine Providence, has been given for this hour — that freedom may not fail. The exercise of our national strength, in order to achieve its true purpose, must be guided by those principles on which our strength was built. We must apply those principles in both national and international affairs. We shall be worthy of world leadership only if we are willing to pledge "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor" in behalf of the right.

At present, when America is beset by so many frustrations, when there are so many temptations to despair, all who believe in God have the special duty of keeping alive within their own hearts and within the hearts of all free men a true and undying hope. Our hope will not be for a Utopia of material well-being, although we do look forward to a world in which science and technology will be used to the full in eliminating needless poverty, hunger and disease. Nor do we expect a world in which all will be morally and socially perfect. Our hope is for a world in which men, imperfect though they be, will accept the reign of God — a world in which the principles of the natural law and of the Christian dispensation will be recognized as the norm of moral judgment and the basis of the social order. Should such an order take hold on the world of today, there is not a single problem, no matter what its magnitude, which would not admit of a reasonable and, on the whole, a satisfactory solution.

Above all, the Christian today must have a profound sense of mission, which will cause him to bear witness to his religious faith and his moral convictions as the early Christians did — by deed and affirmation, even by death. Such was St. Paul's program of action; such, too, was St. Augustine's. Like Paul, we face a world largely paganized. Like Augustine, we see the encroachment of barbarism. Like both, we must be dauntless in proclaiming Christ.

In this way, we shall be true to our Christian duty in preserving God's moral order as man's standard of action. Only in this way shall we preserve the religious and moral traditions in which our country was born, and without which our country cannot survive.

DRUG ADDICITS

Bureau of Narcotics

Excerpts from the 1960 report "Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs," by the Bureau of Narcotics of the U. S. Treasury Department.

An eight-year intensive survey of narcotic addiction in the United States indicates a continuing gradual decrease in the incidence of narcotic addition, particularly since 1956, when Congress enacted laws providing severe minimum mandatory penalties against unlawful sellers of narcotics and against unlawful possessors of narcotics who are recidivists.

The incidence of addiction now stands at approximately 1 addict in every 4,000 of the population. The principal factor in decreasing the incidence has been the salutary effect of the Federal minimum mandatory penalty law, where it has been augmented by adequate State laws to curtail the distribution and availability of narcotics. Sixty-five percent of the addicts once reported have not been reported subsequently.

Addicts in New York, California and Illinois

New York State, the principal headquarters for distribution of great quantities of heroin smuggled chiefly from France, reported 46 percent of the 44,906 addicts throughout the United States on December 31, 1960. Although inadequate State laws have contributed to the high incidence of addiction, strong State enforcement and rigid application of Federal minimum mandatory penalty laws against unlawful narcotic sellers, including conspirators, have reduced the availability of narcotics so that not more than five percent of the addicts reported in New York State are able to maintain a continuous, substantial addiction to narcotic drugs.

At present 16.5 percent of the total number of addicts reported in the United States are found in California. Beset by an increasingly high rate of addiction and illicit narcotic traffic, California has become aroused to the need for State laws to provide heavier minimum mandatory penalties to deter narcotic violators, particularly unlawful sellers.

In Illinois, strong enforcement of the Federal law as well as an adequate State law has reduced the availability of narcotics so that addicts usually are found to have an intermittent and low-level addiction to drugs. Illinois now has 14.5 percent of the total addicts reported.

Law Enforcement in Ohio and Texas

Ohio continues its outstanding example of salutary results produced by rigid enforcement and uniform imposition of severe mandatory penalty laws. Since 1955, this State has been operating with a 20-year minimum mandatory penalty law against unlawful sellers of narcotics. Ohio has been almost cleared of the narotic traffic. In metropolitan areas such as Cincinnati a narcotic addict is seldom found.

The five major cities of Texas, which before 1956 were heavily concentrated areas of addiction, now are relatively free of the traffic. Texas reported only 160 addicts during 1960, a 70 percent decrease since enactment of the 1956 Federal Narcotic Control Act. Also under the Texas State law, second offenses bring mandatory penalties of 10 years. Sentences of 15 to 40 years or life imprisonment, however, are the rule.

The average length of narcotic sentences in 86 U. S. District Courts has increased from 20 months in 1948, to 48 months in 1956, and 78 months in 1960.

Active Narcotic Addicts Reported in the United States (Dec. 31, 1960)

Mexican	3,159	(7.0%)
Puerto Rican	4,192	(9.3%)
All Other White	11,324	(25.3%)
Negro	25,552	(56.9%)
All Other	679	(1.5%)
Total	44,906	
Male	35,905	
Female	9,001	

Age of Active Narcotic Addicts in the United States (Dec. 31, 1960)

Under 21	1,769	(3.9%)
White (73%)	1,291	
Negro (27%)	477	
21 - 30	23,508	(52.4%)
31 - 40	14,948	(33.3%)
Over 40	4,681	(10.4%)

Illicit Traffic

The illegal traffic in the United States is supported by narcotics smuggled into the country. There is no evidence of illegal production or manufacture in the United States, and diversion from legal channels is negligible. There was no evidence of drugs smuggled through the United States to another country in 1960.

Raw Opium: The total quantity of raw opium seized throughout the United States during 1960 was 36.6 kilograms compared with 2.8 kilograms seized in 1959. The principal source of raw opium was India.

Prepared Opium: The total quantity of prepared opium seized throughout the United States in 1960 was 8.3 kilograms compared with 5.6 kilograms seized in 1959. The principal known source of prepared opium seized in the United States in 1960 was Mexico.

Heroin: The total quantity of heroin seized

throughout the United States in 1960 was 183.3 kilograms compared with 78.2 kilograms seized in 1959. The principal sources of heroin seized in the United States were France, Mexico, Italy, and Hong Kong.

Morphine: The total quantity of morphine seized throughout the United States during 1960 was 1.4 kilogram compared with 1.6 kilogram seized in 1959. No significant seizures of morphine were made in which the country of origin could be determined.

Cocaine: The total quantity of cocaine seized throughout the United States during 1960 was 2.7 kilograms compared with 6 kilograms seized during 1959. The two chief sources of cocaine seized in the United States during 1960 were Bolivia and Guatemala.

Cannabis (Marihuana): The total quantity of marihuana seized throughout the United States during 1960 was 1,890.3 kilograms compared with 2,154.3 kilograms seized in 1959. The principal source of the seized marihuana was Mexico.

A Challenge to Women

"The biggest single disgrace in Britain is the shortage of Catholic women in the social services," a bishop said in London. He added, "This amounts to keeping Our Lady out of public life."

"It is dangerous for women to be content with fulfilling their duties at home and to persuade themselves that what God wants of them ends there," Auxiliary Bishop Thomas B. Pearson of Lancaster said in a special statement in the Catholic Times, British weekly.

"It is treason to the Mystical Body for a priest to assuage their consciences with this easy doctrine unless because of severe limiting facts it is the stark truth," he continued.

The 54-year-old Bishop, charged by the Hierarchy with directing the national Catholic women's organizations, accused Catholic women of allowing Catholic homes to rot into materialism for want of solidarity and support, of looking for God in the sky instead of seeing Him in people and so not giving a part of their lives to social service.

"Is not this the biggest single disgrace in our country — the shortage of Catholic women in service to the community?" the Bishop asked. "The keeping of Our Lady out of British public life — for that is what it amounts to.

"On the home front there are two matters of vital importance. One is Catholic family life. It is in desperate danger. Many a time I have assisted at or witnessed a wedding of a young couple, and as they have walked away my heart has died within me because of their youth and their ignorance.

"I know for certain that family planners, hire purchase [installment credit] firms with their alluring literature will deluge them from every side both by post and by personal call. But not one call at the door, not one booklet delivered free through the letter box, not one invitation from a Catholic with a disinterested love.

"Catholic girls leave school highly equipped, but instead of seeking further training in order to pull their weight in social service keep themselves to themselves and then are troubled because society is becoming more pagan. The only question an Englishman asks is not what do people believe, but what do they do. The way to win hearts and minds is to serve them."

Bishop Pearson was urging more Catholics to support the Catholic Women's League, founded in 1906, but which "in some quarters has been so little understood and supported in its efforts to train Catholic women to play a useful part in service to the community as a whole."

Modern Crisis in Lay Leadership

"There is a crisis in the lay apostolate and the crisis is precisely the lack of adequately trained leadership," said William F. Johnson of Paterson, N. J., NCCM president. "The challenge of our time, voiced over and over again by pope, bishops and priests, is the challenge to penetrate society and institutions with the Christian message. This is the challenge to the laity to form Christian leadership capable of answering the call of the Church for responsible lay action and initiative."

"NCCM proposes to meet this crisis head-on with a leadership training program for the parish. The meeting of diocesan and national leaders in January will consider this problem in all its aspects and in particular will discuss NCCM's new Parish Leadership Training Course," he added.

The modern crisis in lay leadership will be the main topic of discussion at a special meeting in Washington of the General Assembly of the National Council of Catholic Men, January 18 to 21. NCM staff members will demonstrate the council's newly developed Parish Leadership Training Course, which was recently given an initial test in a two-day meeting in Indianapolis. Representatives from ten dioceses in the area attended the sessions.

"The Indianapolis experiment," said Martin H. Work, NCCM executive director, "may well go down in lay apostolate history as that point in time when laymen of the United States made a new beginning in accepting Pope Pius XII's direction to the laity to undertake the forming and training of its own people. This task of training is not solely the burden of the clergy; the laity must assume some responsibility. NCCM proposes to do this in a new and practical way."

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